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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/648,632	08/28/2000	Takayuki Yabu	001092	5763

23850 7590 05/07/2002

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EXAMINER

JACKSON, CORNELIUS H

[REDACTED]
ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2828

DATE MAILED: 05/07/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/648,632	YABU, ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Cornelius H. Jackson	2828	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 March 2002.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-2 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-2 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some *
 - c) None:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 - a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Acknowledgment

1. Acknowledgment is made that applicant's Response, filed on 21 March 2002, has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Itakura (JP 1-268078 A) [Applicant's prior art]. Itakura teaches a discharge electrode connecting structure for a laser apparatus **Figs. 6-7** comprising a pair of anode **105A** and cathode **105B** provided within a laser chamber **102** for sealing a laser gas in an opposing manner, generating a discharge so as to excite a laser gas flowing there between and oscillating a laser beam; a conductive anode base **106** holding the anode; an insulative cathode base **108** holding the cathode; and a return plate **109** electrically connecting the anode base to the laser chamber so as to supply a current to the anode, as stated in Applicant's specification, page 1, paragraph 3 through page 3, line 5.

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Itakura fails to teach the thick of the anode base equal to or between, 100 to 500 μm . It has been held that “[W]here the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation.” *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955).

Regarding claim 2, Itakura teaches the return plate is arranged substantially in parallel to a gas flow of the laser gas flowing between the discharge electrode, **see specification, page 2, lines 20-26.**

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed 21 March 2002 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant arguments are as follows:

- a. That JP 1-268078A (Applicant's admitted prior art) teaches every element of the claimed invention, but fails to teach the “thickness of the return plate”.
- b. The thickness is “critical, generally by showing that the claimed range achieves unexpected results relative to the prior art”.
- c. Examiner should refer to MPEP Section 2122.05 Subsection III.
- d. Criticality is taught in the specification.

Examiner relies the following:

- a. The thickness of the return plate was found through routine experimentation as disclosed in the specification page 9, line 10 through page

10, line 12. And as stated above, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation.

- b. Evidence indicating the criticality and showing the unexpectedness of the thickness of the return plate has not been presented. JP 1-268078A (Applicant's admitted prior art) teaches making the gas flow between electrodes uniform and making discharge uniform, by forming planar supporting members and not hindering the gas flow through a main discharging part 1. Conversely, the gas flow can be straightened.
- c. See MPEP Section 716.02-716.02(g).
- d. Also see MPEP Section 716.02-716.02(g) for a discussion of criticality and unexpected results.

Conclusion

5. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cornelius H. Jackson whose telephone number is (703)306-5981. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00 - 5:00, Monday - Friday.

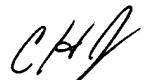
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Ip can be reached on (703)308-3098. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)308-7722 for regular communications and (703)308-7721 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-0956.



PAUL IP

SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800



chj
May 6, 2002